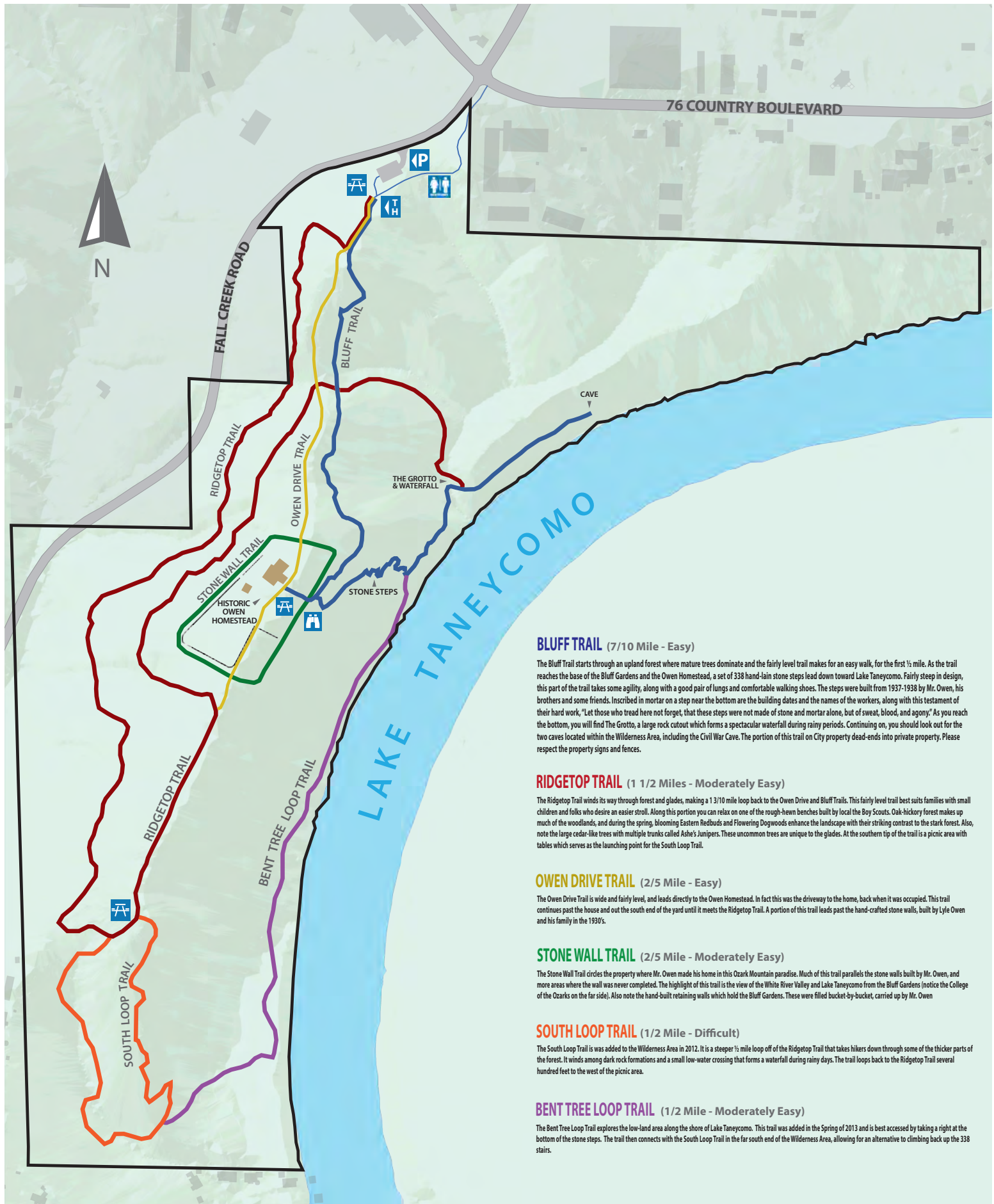


# Lakeside Forest Wilderness Area



## BLUFF TRAIL (7/10 Mile - Easy)

The Bluff Trail starts through an upland forest where mature trees dominate and the fairly level trail makes for an easy walk, for the first 1/2 mile. As the trail reaches the base of the Bluff Gardens and the Owen Homestead, a set of 338 hand-lain stone steps lead down toward Lake Taneycomo. Fairly steep in design, this part of the trail takes some agility, along with a good pair of lungs and comfortable walking shoes. The steps were built from 1937-1938 by Mr. Owen, his brothers and some friends. Inscribed in mortar on a step near the bottom are the building dates and the names of the workers, along with this testament of their hard work, "Let those who tread here not forget, that these steps were not made of stone and mortar alone, but of sweat, blood, and agony." As you reach the bottom, you will find The Grotto, a large rock cutout which forms a spectacular waterfall during rainy periods. Continuing on, you should look out for the two caves located within the Wilderness Area, including the Civil War Cave. The portion of this trail on City property dead-ends into private property. Please respect the property signs and fences.

## RIDGETOP TRAIL (1 1/2 Miles - Moderately Easy)

The Ridgetop Trail winds its way through forest and glades, making a 1 3/10 mile loop back to the Owen Drive and Bluff Trails. This fairly level trail best suits families with small children and folks who desire an easier stroll. Along this portion you can relax on one of the rough-hewn benches built by local Boy Scouts. Oak-hickory forest makes up much of the woodlands, and during the spring, blooming Eastern Redbuds and Flowering Dogwoods enhance the landscape with their striking contrast to the stark forest. Also, note the large cedar-like trees with multiple trunks called Ashe's Jumpers. These uncommon trees are unique to the glades. At the southern tip of the trail is a picnic area with tables which serves as the launching point for the South Loop Trail.

## OWEN DRIVE TRAIL (2/5 Mile - Easy)

The Owen Drive Trail is wide and fairly level, and leads directly to the Owen Homestead. In fact this was the driveway to the home, back when it was occupied. This trail continues past the house and out the south end of the yard until it meets the Ridgetop Trail. A portion of this trail leads past the hand-crafted stone walls, built by Lyle Owen and his family in the 1930's.

## STONE WALL TRAIL (2/5 Mile - Moderately Easy)

The Stone Wall Trail circles the property where Mr. Owen made his home in this Ozark Mountain paradise. Much of this trail parallels the stone walls built by Mr. Owen, and more areas where the wall was never completed. The highlight of this trail is the view of the White River Valley and Lake Taneycomo from the Bluff Gardens (notice the College of the Ozarks on the far side). Also note the hand-built retaining walls which hold the Bluff Gardens. These were filled bucket-by-bucket, carried up by Mr. Owen.

## SOUTH LOOP TRAIL (1/2 Mile - Difficult)

The South Loop Trail is was added to the Wilderness Area in 2012. It is a steeper 1/2 mile loop off of the Ridgetop Trail that takes hikers down through some of the thicker parts of the forest. It winds among dark rock formations and a small low-water crossing that forms a waterfall during rainy days. The trail loops back to the Ridgetop Trail several hundred feet to the west of the picnic area.

## BENT TREE LOOP TRAIL (1/2 Mile - Moderately Easy)

The Bent Tree Loop Trail explores the low-land area along the shore of Lake Taneycomo. This trail was added in the Spring of 2013 and is best accessed by taking a right at the bottom of the stone steps. The trail then connects with the South Loop Trail in the far south end of the Wilderness Area, allowing for an alternative to climbing back up the 338 stairs.